

In a society where teachers do not always receive the appreciation they deserve, I am pleased to honor and commend Ms. Steen for her decades of dedication to students in Central Washington. Ms. Steen exemplifies the best of America.

To Ms. Steen and the teachers across America that are educating tomorrow's leaders, thank you.

IN OBSERVANCE OF THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 21, 2005

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, this Sunday, April 24, 2005 is the 90th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the systematic and planned extermination of an entire ethnic group by the Ottoman Empire, and the first act of genocide in the 20th Century. I join my colleagues and the Armenian-American community in my district, the 9th Congressional District of New Jersey, and with people of goodwill throughout the world, in solemn observance and acknowledgement of the deaths of 1.5 million Armenians during the years 1915–1923.

Countless Armenian families were torn apart forever by these gruesome acts of violence—acts that have been seared into the memories of the courageous individuals who survived. Survivors have vowed to never let their children, grand-children, and great-grandchildren, or others in the world, forget this past. Unfortunately, there is still a denial on the part of many people around the world about the actual occurrence of a genocide in Armenia. I stand steadfast with my Armenian friends in support of an acknowledgement of the horrors that were inflicted upon their families, and I continue to urge the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

This year, the number “ninety” serves as a reminder that too many years have passed without proper recognition, and it serves as a motivational tool to continue to educate the world about the Armenian Genocide. In past years on the day of the anniversary, my Armenian-American constituents from St. Leon Armenian Apostolic Church in Fair Lawn, St. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church in Ridgefield, and St. Thomas Armenian Apostolic Church in Tenafly would participate in solemn services held in memory of the martyrs of the Armenian Genocide at their individual churches. This year, however, the number “ninety” will unify Armenian-Americans as all members of the Armenian Apostolic churches on the East Coast will convene in Times Square in New York City to stand together and have their voices heard.

This anniversary also provides us with an opportunity to pledge that such a slaughter should never take place again. I am sickened and dismayed by the atrocities that we continue to see today in the Sudan, as well as others that we have seen in the 20th century, such as the Holocaust and the ethnic cleansing campaigns in Cambodia, Kosovo and Rwanda. All of these events should be recognized for what they are: Genocide.

As a Jewish-American, I stand united with Armenians who continue to fight for recogni-

tion of the Armenian Genocide so the world will never forget the first crime against humanity in the 20th Century. I am hopeful that this 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide will bring with it the recognition that is deserved, and help us in our obligations as global citizens to protect the basic human rights of all people. We owe it to our ancestors, our families, and humanity to be committed to preventing genocide in the future, no matter when, where, or to whom it occurs.

BANKRUPTCY ABUSE PREVENTION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 14, 2005

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of S. 256, the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 2005. I believe passage of this important bill is long overdue, and I congratulate Chairman SENSENBRENNER and Chairman OXLEY for their leadership over the past several years in crafting meaningful bankruptcy reform.

The bill we are voting on today will help foster greater personal responsibility and make it more difficult for those who use bankruptcy as a tool for fraud to cheat their way out of debt.

Bankruptcy filings have escalated in recent years, which have had negative consequences on our economy. Yet, numerous studies have shown many bankruptcy debtors are able to repay a significant portion of their debts. If this alarming trend continues, all Americans will pay the price in the form of higher costs for goods, services and credit. These higher costs not only harm consumers, it also stymies growth for businesses.

By addressing bankruptcy abuses, S. 256 will play a role in creating a better environment to conduct business in America, which means more jobs for those who need them.

Some have expressed concerns S. 256 will limit people from filing under Chapter 7. However, estimates show only a small percent of Chapter 7 bankruptcy filers would have their petitions dismissed or forced into Chapter 13 or Chapter 11 bankruptcy. One study cited by the Committee on the Judiciary suggests as few as 3.6 percent of Chapter 7 filers would be moved into repayment plans under the new means test.

I recognize there are cases where families and individuals need to file for Chapter 7 bankruptcy for very legitimate reasons. Sometimes hardships and unforeseen circumstances happen in life, and bankruptcy is a needed last option to help families survive.

However, the United States cannot afford to continue down the path where high consumer debt is routinely directed toward bankruptcy as a first stop rather than a last resort. I am pleased S. 256 addresses common bankruptcy abuses while continuing to offer Americans who need to file for bankruptcy the means to do so.

The consumer bankruptcy provisions of S. 256 address the needs of both creditors and debtors. With respect to the interests of creditors, this legislation responds to many factors

that have contributed to the increase in consumer bankruptcy filings, such as lack of personal financial accountability.

The bill provides many debtor protections such as provisions allowing debtors to exempt certain education IRA plans, fortifying exemptions for certain retirement pension funds, and enhancing the professionalism standards for attorneys and others who assist consumer debtors with their bankruptcy cases.

S. 256 ensures debtors receive notice of alternatives to bankruptcy relief, requires debtors to participate in debt repayment programs, and institutes a pilot program to study the effectiveness of consumer financial management programs.

I am also pleased S. 256 contains several provisions that will help make American businesses more competitive. By cracking down on bankruptcy abuse, we eliminate another obstacle small businesses face as they compete in the global marketplace.

Currently, a business can be sued by a bankruptcy trustee and forced to pay back money previously paid to it by a firm that later filed for bankruptcy protection. Under the reforms of S. 256, small businesses will have an easier time successfully defending against these suits.

The reforms will promote greater certainty in the financial market place as well. S. 256 reduces systemic risk in the banking system and financial marketplace by minimizing the risk of disruption when parties to certain financial transactions become bankrupt or insolvent.

S. 256 addresses the special problems presented by small business debtors by instituting firm deadlines and enforcement mechanisms to weed out those debtors who are not likely to reorganize. It also requires the court and other designated entities to monitor these cases more actively.

Under the current law, nearly every item of information supplied by a debtor in connection with his or her bankruptcy case is made available to the public. S. 256 prohibits the disclosure of the names of the debtor's minor children and requires such information to be kept in a nonpublic record, which can be made available for inspection only by the court and certain other designated entities. In addition, if a business debtor had a policy prohibiting it from selling “personally identifiable information” about its customers and the policy was in effect at the time of the bankruptcy filing, then the sale of such information is prohibited unless certain conditions are satisfied.

These are just a few of the several provisions that make this bill good for American consumers and businesses. I urge my colleagues to join me today in voting for S. 256 so we can limit abuses within our bankruptcy system and promote a stronger America.

IN APPRECIATION OF OUR WORLD WAR II VETERANS

HON. PAUL RYAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 21, 2005

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, as we approach the sixtieth anniversary of VE Day, we must remember and honor the men and women of America's armed forces who secured victory in World War II at a great cost.

They were regular citizens thrust into an extraordinary conflict at a pivotal point in world history, and freedom's future across the globe depended on their courage and character. They sacrificed and endured much in order to defeat tyranny and preserve liberty—overcoming formidable enemies, the elements, and undoubtedly their fears. The freedoms we enjoy today are their legacy, and we must cherish and defend this legacy as they did.

I have been very fortunate to meet quite a few of those in Southeastern Wisconsin who served during World War II, and every time I speak with them it is an inspiration. These heroes in our midst are a constant reminder of the tremendous difference that one person can make in this world. Because they confronted evil and risked their lives to liberate occupied lands, countless individuals around the world were able to grow up enjoying the blessings of freedom, and America's land and liberty were preserved.

Later this week, some of these veterans will be commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of victory in World War II at a special ceremony in Franklin, Wisconsin. They should know that America has not forgotten their bravery and how they and those fighting beside them saved the free world. We will forever be indebted to them for their service to our country in its hour of need, and we will continue to draw strength from this example as we fight terrorism and other threats today and in the future.

RECOGNIZING THE CENTER FOR
YOUTH CITIZENSHIP

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 21, 2005

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in tribute to an organization with a great record of service to the young people of the Sacramento Region. Ever since its inception in the 1980s, the Center for Youth Citizenship has worked tirelessly and successfully to enhance the significance of citizenship and the importance of our laws and institutions to the young people of the local region. I ask all my colleagues to join me in saluting the Center for Youth Citizenship (CYC), one of Sacramento's most respected community organizations.

Founded in 1984, the Center for Youth Citizenship's mission is to have young people respect one another, our institutions, and laws; have a working understanding of citizenship, its requirements and responsibilities; appreciate the foundation and privileges of democracy; and have the skills and character to be engaged and informed participants in everyday community matters. To achieve these goals, CYC has reached out to a diverse group of school and community partners on award winning and recognized school and community programs such as the Gordon D. Schaber Mock trial & Moot Court Competition, Laws for Youth and Families, and California Conflict Resolution and Youth Meditation Project.

Through its partnerships with a broad-based group of government, business and education leaders, CYC initiated the program, With Liberty and Justice for All, in 2004. The program is designed to connect the generations and

groups in the local communities and recommit them to the collective pursuit of equity, justice, and character. In its inaugural year, CYC, along with a coalition of local businesses, community groups, and school districts, attracted a theater full of students to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*. As a result of the hard work of the CYC staff, hundreds of students were treated to a memorable and invaluable learning experience that will likely impact them for the rest of their lives.

This year, CYC has once again brought together an impressive list of community entities to celebrate the second year of the With Liberty and Justice for All community forum. The event theme for the 2005 program is "A Celebration of Citizenship, Education, and Service." Education legend Jaime Escalante, profiled in the Academy Award nominated film "Stand and Deliver," a group of Mr. Escalante's former students, and acclaimed actor Edward James Olmos, who portrayed Mr. Escalante in the movie, are all scheduled to participate in a special screening of "Stand and Deliver" and participate in an important dialogue about the importance of citizenship, education, and service.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to the Center for Youth Citizenship. I would like to especially thank CYC's Executive Director, Dr. Joe Maloney, and his great staff for their dedication and hard work. I am confident that the Center for Youth Citizenship will continue to yield tremendous benefits for the people of Sacramento. I ask all my colleagues to join with me in wishing the Center for Youth Citizenship a successful 2nd annual With Liberty and Justice for All community forum and continued success in all its future endeavors.

THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 21, 2005

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, April 24th marks the 90th commemoration of the Armenian genocide. On that day, Ottoman Turkish leader Talaat Pasha uttered the frightening directive to "Kill every Armenian man, woman, and child without concern."

Between 1915 and 1921, more than 1.5 million Armenians were slaughtered, approximately 80 percent of the population. Men were tied together with ropes, taken to the outskirts of their town and shot or bayoneted by death squads. Women were brutally raped and hundreds of thousands were starved to death. 75 percent of those who were forced into death marches perished, especially children and the elderly. And those who survived the ordeal were herded into the desert without water, thrown off cliffs, burned alive, or drowned.

Ninety years after that first genocide of the 20th century, it is hard for many Americans to conceive of a tragedy on such a scale. An equivalent massacre on U.S. soil would claim the lives of 236 million Americans. That's every man, woman, and child in 48 of the 50 United States.

Some mistakenly believe that recent events make the Armenian tragedy seem long ago.

To the contrary, its relevance has a heightened importance today. One week before Hitler invaded Poland in the fall of 1939, he ordered his generals "to kill without pity or mercy all men, women, and children of Polish race or language. Only in such a way will we win the vital space that we need. Who still talks nowadays about the Armenians?"

That is precisely why we must still talk about the Armenians today. And we must still talk about the Jews, and the Poles, and the Russians, and the Catholics, and the Tutsis, and the moderate Hutus, and the Sudanese whose lives have been lost to genocide.

That is why this week's commemoration here in the United States Congress and those events going on this week are so crucial. If the world fails to remember the Armenian genocide of the early 20th century, we will have abandoned the collective commitment to fight the evils that communities have unleashed upon another.

In these early years of the 21st century, Armenians understand the War on Terror. It is a war they have now been fighting for ninety years. A war the world community still refuses to recognize. As we gather today to pay tribute, it is time for the U.S. Congress to finally designate what we all know to be a case of genocide. While tragically it may not be last, it is time to correct the history in the minds of many and finally declare the Armenian genocide the holocaust that it was.

THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. MICHAEL R. McNULTY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 21, 2005

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I join today with many of my colleagues in remembering the victims of the Armenian Genocide. April 24th will be the 90th anniversary of this human tragedy.

From 1915 to 1923, the world witnessed the first genocide of the 20th Century. This was clearly one of the world's greatest tragedies—the deliberate and systematic Ottoman annihilation of 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children.

Furthermore, another 500,000 refugees fled and escaped to various points around the world—effectively eliminating the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire.

From these ashes arose hope and promise in 1991—and I was blessed to see it. I was one of the four international observers from the United States Congress to monitor Armenia's independence referendum. I went to the communities in the northern part of Armenia, and I watched in awe as 95 percent of the people over the age of 18 went out and voted.

The Armenian people had been denied freedom for so many years and, clearly, they were very excited about this new opportunity. Almost no one stayed home. They were all out in the streets going to the polling places. I watched in amazement as people stood in line for hours to get into these small polling places and vote.

Then, after they voted, the other interesting thing was that they did not go home. They had brought covered dishes with them, and all of these polling places had little banquets afterward to celebrate what had just happened.